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by a wide maroon border. One might call the carpet in this room rather too furiously red. An immense mantel-piece is at the west side, wrought in two-colored woods, and in verde-antique marble with inlaid bronze panels containing figures in bold relief. The steel-and-bronze grate is ornamented by two splendid steel griffons, after the manner of andirons.

The two private dining-rooms are of a much more unobtrusive style. In these we find such delightful features as a carved ebony table; crystal chandeliers, arranged as brackets, in each corner; brown and pale-buff furniture, relieved with mediæval shapes of dragons; carpet of a half-Eastern, half-Gothic design, with the Oriental yellow as the basis of color; and papering of the favorite brown, bronze and gold mixture, with something of a tapestry texture.

Altogether, the Union Club, since its recent decorations were made, occupies a high position among the most luxurious of New York structures. Refinement is everywhere evident, tempering anything like a too lavish display, and winning from wealthful expenditure its best practical results.

EDGAR FAWCETT.

### THE DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY ROOMS.

WHEN the Decorative Art Rooms were first opened in New York, not long ago, the enterprise was an experiment. It was the first definite attempt which had been made to collect this artistic handwork of which so much had been done since the Centennial Exhibition, and put it on the market in a regular business way. It was an attempt to bring women who wanted the work to do, into direct communication with women who wanted the work done; for, although it is by no means a feminine monopoly, the pretty rooms on East Nineteenth street are full of the handiwork of women, and probably women are the principal traffickers in these dainty wares.

The enterprise is a success. The experiment has proved a most palpable hit. At a very moderate commission on the sales, the rooms have proved self-supporting financially; women in all parts of the country find here a market for any work of genuine value; the demand for decorative art work has been stimulated by being systematically supplied, and, fortunately for all concerned, a good standard of excellence in work has been maintained by a committee who set their faces as a flint against artistic rubbish.

Work, in order to be accepted and placed on sale, must have a certain amount of artistic beauty and good mechanical execution, while on pieces of unusual excellence the seal of the society is bestowed.

An hour in these decorative art salesrooms gives one a very fair idea of what American women are doing just now. The first object which attracts the attention of the visitor on entering the hall, is an old-fashioned distaff with its bunch of flax. A distaff is the latest whim of the devotees of bric-à-brac, and has found its way from the neglected garret into many an American parlor. Who would have thought there were so many? Or is there a manufactory where they supply the demand for old-fashioned spinning wheels? Opposite hangs a medallion in plaster, a piece of specimen work in modeling, and below is the card of the teacher, stating terms for lessons.

Entering the front room at the right, one's first impression is of a bazaar full of dainty fabrics, and vivid with color, which is so broken into bits, that it gives a kaleidoscopic effect. All this color resolves itself presently into screens, decorated china, on the mantel, in cases and hanging on the wall, and also large cases full of Kensington art needlework.

This work is, much of it, beautiful and effective. It is done in every variety of color and material, from the design on burlap or self-colored canvas, done in the Kensington crewels, which will wash, up to the most elaborate satin screens, embroidered in silk. From the beginning of time, women have found pleasure and profit in needlecraft, and I have seen birds and branches as faithfully wrought out in silk embroidery by one of our New England grandmothers, who had only her "sampler stitch" to guide her, as any of this royal art needlework. The difference in the value of that work and such as this lies wholly in the design. Women have learned to draw, and so, whatever the design, it has an artistic value and means something. For instance, this "etching" on a gray canvas screen of the figure of a woman catching birds in a net in the air. It is exquisitely drawn; the figure, with its wind-blown drapery, has the strong and simple outlines of the antique. The birds are live birds, executed with such spirit that you can almost hear the light rush of their wings in flight. This is, in design, the best piece of needlework in the room, and is one of the only two which have been stamped with the seal of the society.

The design is drawn by the Vice-President of the so-

ciety and worked out by a lady who does much of this work, and who would earn much more money than she already does if she were able to draw her own designs. This emphasizes the fact that women who wish to earn money by doing this kind of work must have art training. They must be independent in design. The artisan must be also the artist, or else must be content with the second-rate wages always awarded to mere mechanical execution.

Another beautiful screen on which the seal of the society has been placed, is of yellow satin, bordered with a wide margin of rich maroon velvet and fringe. Across this gold background is thrown a blackberry branch, in leaf and blossom. It is very faithfully done, both in drawing and in color.

A very little experience in drawing our American plant-forms teaches one to go for beauty and sharpness of outline in the leaf and flower, to wild flowers and weeds, rather than to the petted plants of the greenhouse. Out in the still green spaces of the woods, they grow as they please, and keep their individuality, while cultivated flowers, like cultivated people, are apt to be very much alike. "The æsthetic bulrush" waves in every corner of these decorative art rooms, and when this has been neglected, the artist has still found her most effective designs among plants which bear it a family resemblance. Strong-leaved flags, "fleur-de-lis," stately golden-rod are here, while ferns and grasses have a quaint, delicate beauty of which one never tires.

These screens are framed, some of them in ebonized wood, and some in light wood, as maple, according to color. Some of the frames are elaborately carved, some are entirely plain. In the cases filled with needlework, are articles of every variety, from the tiny Japanese doyleys, with a bird or butterfly, or hieroglyphic etched on them, to the elaborate tablespread of satin, of the most æsthetic shade of green, and embroidered in gold. There are window curtains and hangings for portières. There are embroidered panels for chairs, and several chairs, upholstered, display the work to advantage.

There is much decorated china, of various degrees of excellence in execution. On the whole, the work indicates a hopeful outgrowth from the idea that decoration is picture-making. The work is done in a truer spirit, with more simplicity, and consequently with more effect than in our first amateur work, and we are not nearly so likely, as we were in the beginning of our ceramic craze, to get a lovely face on a painted dinner plate, or Guido's Aurora on a plaque. Some one has dared to put Cabanel's "Echo," in sepia colors on a plaque, and although the mechanical execution is fair, one shivers at the glitter of the enamel and the hard outlines of the figure. The committee should not have passed it. It is bad art. The prettiest and most satisfying decorations on exhibition are those which throw single flowers and grasses, with an occasional bird or butterfly across the solid tinted background.

Some of the little wooden plates decorated in water-color are very well done. The plates themselves are quite dainty. They are made of clean, sweet maple, cut into sheets the thickness of blotting paper, and then bent into shape. One is decorated in the peacock feather, now so popular, and on another is a bit of golden-rod, with a blue bird flying over it. Sometimes the wood is so shaded in color that it has the effect of a sky, across which birds are flying.

There is illuminated stationery in all colors and designs; all the pretty and dainty trifles that a fertile fancy can conceive.

Among the pottery is one tiny jug, which one familiar with her work recognizes instantly as that of Miss McLaughlin, of Cincinnati, who has rediscovered the Limoges glaze, and is producing much exquisite work. This little jug is a specimen of that falence. As unmistakably characteristic of the artist are Madam Teresa Hegg's water-colors which hang here on the wall, two flower pieces, which have been sent all the way from Germany by this celebrated flower painter. There are a number of decorated tiles, some of them very good in design, and some very commonplace, with a sore lack of imagination. Two young ladies in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, have sold much of this work here. They fill orders promptly, and do good work.

A set of tiles around a grate is done in a running design of holly. In drawing and color, it is bold and effective, rather than beautiful.

There is very little wood-carving. Two hall chairs in oak, elaborately carved and upholstered in green leather, are the work of some carver in this city. Of women's work in wood, there are but two specimens, a hanging cabinet and a parlor easel with two sliding shelves and a portfolio. Both articles are of black walnut, elaborately carved in natural and conventional designs; they are from St. Louis, and have the characteristics of what is known as the Cincinnati wood-carving.

Two bas-reliefs in plaster, on an easel, are marked "sold." One gives two cranes, against the background of a closed barn door. The other is a group of the same birds with the addition of a woman with a baby in her arms. One or two other small pieces in full relief complete the modeling on exhibition, all of which is the work of two ladies in Newark.

There are mirror frames, some of which are pretty and unique. One is a beveled frame of ebonized wood, painted in sprays of purple convolvuli. Another is a flat frame of dead gold; trailing across the top and half-way down the side are some scarlet running vine, with sharp pointed leaves, like tongues of flame; and across the top and turning the corner in like manner, is written in old, quaint, illuminated text: "I behold my shadow, and pass." It is a pretty conceit, and beautifully executed.

This is a sketch, and by no means an exhaustive catalogue of the contents of the Decorative Art Rooms. It is pleasant to add, that while these notes were written, work was sold, orders were taken, and the rooms were constantly full of interested spectators and purchasers.

CALISTA HALSEY.

### OUR FIRST PAGE ILLUSTRATION.

THE etching by Jules Jacquemart, which illustrates our first page, shows us a "console" of the period of Louis XV. This piece of furniture, which is shaped like half of a table, is fastened against the wall, often in front of a mirror. The wood is elaborated with paintings, covered with hard varnish to imitate the effects produced by the Chinese lacquers, which were in vogue at the time this table was made. It is probably by the celebrated Martin, who gave his name to the varnish he discovered. He was only a carriage painter, but the simple words "Vernis par Martin" added to the signature of the artist would augment the value of an article ten-fold.

The assemblage of easy curves which combine to form the general outline and the elementary details of this "ensemble" are typical of that period of the history of designing, when the stately and heavy Louis XIV style had given place to more graceful forms which seem to bend themselves in homage to "la belle Du Barri," and her royal "La France." When the regency came, art felt the influence of a lax government, and style degenerated into the "Rocaille," and from there fell into the "Rococo."

The "garniture" of fine pieces which stands on the console belonged to Marie Antoinette. Under the reign of Louis XVI the art of decoration reached the most exquisite perfection it has yet attained in France.

The centre piece is a Chinese vase in craquelin, with mountings in gilt bronze, chiselled by Gouthière, the master of all French bronze workers. Since the reign of Louis XV, when the first embassy from China reached Paris, Chinese earthenware had become very fashionable, and the influence of Oriental design is very apparent in the Chinese figures, very French in style, which we find in the compositions of Watteau and Boucher, and which received the very appropriate cognomen of "Chinois de paravent." The figures in the candelabra are by Falconet, who, after he had adorned Versailles and Trianon with exquisite little bits of art, went to Russia to execute the colossal statue of Peter the Great.

The bases are in white marble, trimmed with bronze in "or mat."

### THE HARMONY OF COLORS.

WITH some of the Oriental nations, especially the Japanese, who have taught us so much in Decorative Art, the knowledge of harmony in color seems to be intuitive. The commonest designs of the Japanese artist or even artisan show how rarely the judgment of the workman is at fault in this regard. With us Americans, however, it is different. Those who understand the combination of colors with reference to artistic effect are decidedly in the minority. Many of the most beautiful combinations, it is true, are arrived at by chance, taste aiding in the selection; but there are certain principles underlying such happy results, indicating beforehand the colors that will blend appropriately, and anybody may learn these who will take the trouble to study the chromatic scale, as it may be called, which we give below. Any one of these colors placed in proximity to the colors that immediately precede or follow it will allow of that easy gradation or transition which results in harmony, while contrast will be obtained by a further range.

To apply these colors, supposing you wish to associate silver blond with an appropriate tint other than a different shade of blond, you may associate with tawny, or, if seeking an effective contrast, with violet red. Taking

violet, a gentle and easy transition will be obtained by introducing blue or azure, or yellowish azure, while a good contrasting color exists in yellow itself. The scale is an ascending as well as a descending one, and thus lake may be adopted in connection with red, orange, or its associate tints, or with green, and the variety of combined tints in which green predominates, while extreme contrast will be obtained by referring to a higher number.

## CHROMATIC SCALE.

- |                     |                         |                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Silver blond.    | 16. Azure.              | 31. Greenish purple.      |
| 2. Blond.           | 17. Yellowish azure.    | 32. Green.                |
| 3. Golden blond.    | 18. Very bright yellow. | 33. Yellowish green.      |
| 4. Brilliant blond. | 19. Yellow.             | 34. Yellow green.         |
| 5. Tawny.           | 20. Brilliant yellow.   | 35. Orange green.         |
| 6. Brilliant tawny. | 21. Orange yellow.      | 36. Greenish orange.      |
| 7. Copper red.      | 22. Orange.             | 37. Rose orange.          |
| 8. Ochre.           | 23. Reddish orange.     | 38. Rose lake.            |
| 9. Violet ochre.    | 24. Red orange.         | 39. Violet lake.          |
| 10. Violet red.     | 25. Orange red.         | 40. Greenish orange.      |
| 11. Violet.         | 26. Orange lake.        | 41. Green.                |
| 12. Indigo.         | 27. Lake.               | 42. Yellowish green.      |
| 13. Deep blue.      | 28. Brilliant lake.     | 43. Reddish yellow green. |
| 14. Blue.           | 29. Purpled lake.       |                           |
| 15. Clear blue.     | 30. Bluish lake.        | 44. Rose lake.            |

This list of colors is by no means exhaustive, but it has the merit of having its correspondence in nature, and really presenting a natural order. Thus the tints from Nos. 1 to 12 are exactly those which can be so blended or separately presented as to exhibit the colors which the clouds assume, which are black or very pure ash color; white, or very slight ash color; the color of smoke or coffee; red, more or less fiery; blue, very deep, and sometimes approaching the violet. The first blond is properly that of light hair in childhood, which becomes progressively deeper in the order of Nos. 2, 3, and 4 in the scale. These first tints, too, are those which are observed about the moon when she is surrounded by clouds. The tints from Nos. 12 to 28 have their types in the sky constantly before our eyes, for who is there who knows not the sky, "with rosy forehead and golden feet?" The tints of the dawning day are presented in this very order; hence its naturalness and the reliance that may be placed on this portion of the scale for a choice of delicately-graduated hues. The tints produced by vapors and clouds are those which range from Nos. 29 to 38. They contain in general more fire than the natural tints of the sky, but this quality is nothing in comparison with the purity, vividness, and variety of these secondary tints. They are represented at evening in the lower region of the atmosphere, when the air no longer retains its transparency and is charged with vapors. It is those vapors to which we attribute the inflamed appearance of the sky, because they possess the power of transmitting the tints from Nos. 39 to 44, which are those of a fiery cast.

## HOME UPHOLSTERY.

## I.—CURTAINS.

Owing to the great interest shown in ornamental furniture and its accessories, ladies should have some practical knowledge in the important branch of upholstery. Formerly a few orders to tradesmen were all that devolved upon the mistress of a house; now she not only chooses the material but ornaments it, and often takes an active share in its making up. True, there are many parts of the business necessarily monopolized by men, such as the fixing of complicated and heavy draperies, etc., which call for considerable muscular strength. However, for some parts of the work women's skill is more than ever in request. We propose, therefore, to give a few hints on this matter for the help of the housewife.

Curtains, portières, and hangings may receive some remarks before speaking of the more elaborate sofa covers, etc. The first attention is to be directed to choice of material, lining, color, and trimming; in this we do not go into very minute particulars, as our aim is rather to deal with the making up of fabrics than their artistic bearings. As to material, the selection depends upon the probable cost, and the appropriation of the hangings; these being either employed to exclude draught or to ornament both windows and doors, not only in apartments but also in staircases, corridors, tents and verandahs. Curtains for staircase windows and mirrors on landings are chosen in accordance with the rest of the decoration. In lofty corridors opening out into suites of rooms, curtains are suspended from a pole stretched across the passage way at about three-fourths of its length. The space intervening between it and the nearest door, is convenient for placing out of sight tables, flower vases, etc., either before or after a dinner party or ball. Pretty chintz curtains also serve at times to divide off a portion of a bed or dressing room, or to conceal a recess, which, furnished with pegs, is thus transformed into a kind of hanging

wardrobe. Occasionally double curtains are employed—for instance, lace with velvet and silk, etc., cherry-red satin cloth with top curtains, in reseda-colored woolen material, or Aubusson rep, matching the portière, upon brocade harmonizing with the easy chairs, the latter cut eight inches longer to serve as a border.

Having then settled to which of these uses our curtains are to be applied, the next step will be making a choice between the innumerable stuffs and artistic colors everywhere exhibited. There are velvet, plush, brocade, satin, waste silks, Oriental fabrics, heavy carpet-like textures interwoven with gold thread, damask, and satin cloth, besides serge that drapes so beautifully, reps, moreens, baizes, camel-hair cloths, charity blankets, oatmeal cloth, etc. In lighter textures, cretonnes have almost replaced the old-fashioned glazed chintzes. Those now manufactured show increasingly artistic conceptions, and some of the latest, depicting an historical or Watteau scene, are sold at eight guineas per pair, in lengths of four yards each. Crash, Bolton and workhouse sheeting look charming, as do also hop-sacking, unbleached linen, twill, and Java canvas, without mentioning the numerous kinds of white and colored muslin, lace, and guipure; and the more homely ones in knitting, netting, and crochet. Madras and Cretan muslins win great favor, specially in dwarf curtains. Through their gauze-like texture, the sunlight sheds a soft glow on the Oriental designs, and the effect is really lovely. There are several varieties of this rather costly tissue, including the striped with opaque bars in dull colors, alternating with an equal groundwork space, the fan and the floriated with patterns seemingly darned into the fabric. A similar kind has the scrolls, etc., wrought entirely in white, and the threads, cut on the wrong side, render the surface quite fluffy. Some of the Japanese paper curtains display really good designs, and are often found very useful while moving, or as a temporary substitute for more expensive hangings. Fireplace curtains appear in extremely handsome materials, such as cloth of gold, satin, velvet, brocade, and painted or embroidered Indian muslin. The Oriental style being now so popular, Persian needlework harmonizes perfectly with the quaint chimney-piece decoration, and utilizes to advantage any carefully stored specimens too short for window curtains, yet too entire for scattering about on small cushions and chair seats. With regard to color, we may choose peacock from the deepest to the coldest tint, golden and russet browns, sage greens, dull brick-reds, and in fact all unobtrusive tints, as suitable for every furniture. As a rule, window curtains gently contrast with the wall paper; and portières, though not necessarily of similar material or design, must be in accordance with both. In patterns, running sprays are preferable to the flat heaviness of scroll figures. Designs traversing an entire surface give a better effect than regular bands leaving intermediate spaces of groundwork color. It should also be borne in mind that horizontal stripes give greater breadth, while perpendicular ones add to the apparent height of a low-pitched room.

Cretonnes and mixed fabrics need nothing when woven both sides alike; but such materials as velvet, satin, etc., have generally a backing of foulard, twill, silk, merino, or coburg. To improve the set of heavy textures, an interlining of some woolen substance is occasionally added. The somewhat harsh whiteness of muslins is sometimes relieved by colored tarlatan. This diffuses the light more pleasantly, and is generally considered to set off the furniture. In bed fittings (curtains, pillow cases and quilts, box-plaited wall hangings and screens), plain and Swiss muslin is enhanced by a lining of colored satteen or cambric. Thus we lately saw a charming bed-room for a young lady, in which muslin curtains were draped on pink satteen, and bordered by a fringe of pink and green balls to harmonize with the lining and paper. Abroad, lace or embroidered muslin curtains are frequently hung inside the bedstead, softening off the rich tints of silk and damask. Linings, generally speaking, harmonize with the prevailing tint in the curtain pattern, though pale blue, rose, buff, and creamy white accord with almost every color.

Many materials are so beautiful in themselves that trimming is perfectly optional. In plain fabrics, however, ornamentation considerably enhances the general appearance. Manufacturers prepare fringes, cords and galloons to match most of their textures; and in woman's work, tent stitch, as well as almost every kind of embroidery and lace, is brought into requisition. Needlework has undoubtedly a richer effect on the fabric itself, but for economy and convenience independent bands are to be recommended. They can ornament two or three pairs of curtains, and in alterations are available for any further use. Carefully tacked, stitched, and pressed, these bands set so beautifully flat that they seem to form part of the material. Muslin curtains may be tastefully edged with plain or scalloped frilling, and lace of every kind,

with a colored ribbon threaded in and out of the heading, or a corresponding insertion let in at about the distance of its own width. The place of ornamentation rather varies; if required as a finish to the edge, the trimming borders the sides alone, or the sides and hem; in other arrangements it crosses the curtain at a distance of six or eight inches from the top and lower part. The latter, particularly for portières and wall hangings, is decidedly the best—a horizontal line cannot be completely lost in a fold, as sometimes happens to a perpendicular pattern. Dados, formerly limited to portières, etc., are now very much applied to window curtains; thus a sage-green serge has a 25-in. or 27-in. dado of peacock-blue velvet plush, felled on, and the seam hidden with fancy stitches. Above is a space of about eight inches, adorned with embroidery, and surmounting this an equally broad band of the plush.

Many hangings, also, like screens, are entirely covered with scroll and floral patterns, outlined in colored silks, and a great deal of gold thread.

For panels, satin, linen, and gilt leather painting is the latest novelty.

## A LADY'S BEDCHAMBER.

THE most sumptuously-furnished bedchamber we have ever heard of is that of a French lady; it is thus described by a Paris correspondent: The couch has a counterpane of sky-blue brocaded satin, turned up with pale pink. The pillows are of holland lawn, triply edged with richest lace. The bedstead itself is a mass of elaborate carving and gilding. The "ruelle" of the bed is screened by a magnificent piece of tapestry, designed and woven in the workshops of M. Penon. A tripod table of oxidized silver stands by the bedside. The carpet is of triple velvet pile. A portal, veiled by hangings of damask, leads to the adjoining breakfast-room. Cabinets, "fauteuils" and footstools of superb material and workmanship, and an infinity of costly knicknacks scattered about, fill up this enchanting "installation." But the chief charm of this Abode of the Graces consists in the "encadrement," the softly-surging mass of draperies which serve as a framework to the entire apartment, and which are composed of a deep sea-green plush velvet, giving very bright high lights, and with heavy bullion fringes and tassels, the last culminating in one large "gland" of chenille, which is pendant from the ceiling almost like unto a chandelier. The scheme of color, it will be seen, is wonderfully subtle. The effect is as though, turning from the frame of dark-green drapery, with its beamy lights and reflections, you were gazing at a warmly-lit boudoir. It is a selenograph combined with an "effet de lampe."

## Among the Dealers.

RATTAN FURNITURE.—The near approach of summer, with its torrid heat, leads those who love home comfort to prepare their door and window screens, and other conveniences for admitting air to their rooms while excluding the dust of the street, also to look about for a substitute for the heavy furniture appropriate to the winter season, but too warm for the dog-days. That substitute is found in the light, graceful and clean-looking rattan furniture, which is yearly growing more popular here, though hardly as rapidly as its excellence demands. In England and France it is seen almost everywhere, particularly in the latter country, where the "Oxford chairs" are much used. On this side of the water American ingenuity has been applied to the manufacture of this kind of furniture, with excellent results, the American rattan article being stronger, lighter and of more elegant design than the European goods, while it is at the same time of more uniform quality. It is made either plain or gilded; it can be adorned with decorative needlework and embroidery according to taste, and chairs or lounges may be used with or without cushions. There is not a corner of a summer sitting-room or a lady's boudoir for which an appropriate article of furniture in rattan is not produced, even to the most delicate bracket or étagère. The writer has seen entire rooms set with this handsome furniture, with charming effect. Managers of theaters, with an eye for the beautiful, are very fond of using rattan furniture in their "mises en scènes." There is nothing more elegant for a summer room than the skeleton work-tables or stands now made of rattan, with the work-bag netted in strong netting silk, producing a rich effect by the employment of three shades, or two contrasting colors, four rows of each color. Any woman of taste can decorate them or any other article of rattan furniture. If they would know what can be accomplished in this direction, let them call at the warehouses of the Wakefield Rattan Company, No. 814 Broadway, where every variety of needlework decoration may be seen applied to their furniture. The illustration on page 19 shows one of the work-stands alluded to. It gives the decorated tasseled top and the work-bag beneath. The mesh of the work-bag should not be wider than one inch, and in making it should be begun from the center, and worked around, increasing every third round, making two stitches in every alternate loop. The added tassels should match the netting.